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R 311805Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1576
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3659
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0326
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUN LIMA 5103
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1716
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1749
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 2971
RUEHGE/AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN 0070
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3664
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 0023
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1410
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASH DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DOJ WASHDC
RUEHEPA/HQ EPA WASHDC
RUEANAT/NASA WASHDC
RUCPDC/NOAA WASHDC
RUMIAAA/USCINCON MIAMI FL
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 1516
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000887

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/ENV: RWING
DEPT FOR OES/PCI: LSPERLING
DEPT FOR WHA/EPSC: JBANDO
DEPT PASS USAID TO LAC/RSD, LAC/SAM, G/ENV, PPC/ENV
TREASURY FOR USED IBRD AND IDB AND INTL/MDB
USDA FOR FOREST SERVICE: LIZ MAHEW
INTERIOR FOR DIR INT AFFAIRS: K WASHBURN
INTERIOR FOR FWS: TOM RILEY
INTERIOR PASS USGS FOR INTERNATIONAL: J WEAVER
JUSTICE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES: JWEBB
EPA FOR INTERNATIONAL: CAM HILL-MACON
USDA FOR ARS/INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH: G FLANLEY
NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL: HAROLD STOLBERG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [PREL](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: YOSEMITE-TORRES DEL PAINE SISTER PARK PARTNERSHIP

Ref: Santiago 856

11. SUMMARY. At the conclusion of the U.S.-Chile Joint Commission on Science and Technology (JCM) on May 10, a partnership between Yosemite National Park in California and Torres del Paine (TDP) in southern Chile was signed, the first of its kind between a U.S. and Chilean park. The partnership has already led to a bilateral plan of action between the parks and is another sign of the growing depth and breadth of U.S.-Chile environmental cooperation. END SUMMARY.

SISTER PARK PARTNERSHIP GETS RIGHT TO WORK

12. Immediately after the conclusion of the second U.S.-Chile JCM (reftel), the U.S. and Chile signed a Sister Park Partnership between Yosemite National Park in California and Torres del Paine (TDP) in Patagonia in southern Chile. Visiting Chile for the signing were Yosemite Superintendent Mike Tollefson and Yosemite Chief of Education Chris Stein. Along with the Department's OES South American Hub Director James Story, the Yosemite officials visited TDP and Patagonia from May 11-17. During this visit, the parks agreed upon a work plan to be implemented immediately.

13. While in Patagonia, the Yosemite visitors teamed up with TDP Superintendent Jose Linnebrink for outreach meetings with local

elected officials, the University of Magallanes (where the Embassy will soon open an American Corner) and regional media to highlight the Sister Park Partnership. During the visit to TDP itself to develop the joint work plan, the parks began sharing experiences on issues such as concessions, waste treatment, water quality issues, and especially how to use park revenues for education and conservation.

¶4. The next step in the work plan calls for Linnebrink and two TDP staff members to visit Yosemite in September. In addition to learning about Yosemite Park operations, TDP and Yosemite will work with a Chilean NGO, Fundacion Patagonia, and Chile's Consul General in San Francisco to raise awareness of the partnership and secure financial support for future activities.

NEW FUNDING SHOWS CHILE'S ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

¶5. The Sister Park Partnership with Yosemite is part of a new dawn for TDP. The park's annual budget in 2007 will jump from last year's USD 44,000 to USD 1.25 million. The difference is due to an increase in the park admission fee from USD 20 to USD 30 and, most importantly to new rules allowing the bulk of those funds to remain for the park's use. In 2006, the park welcomed 120,000 visitors and that figure is expected to grow by seven percent in 2007. Superintendent Linnebrink has plans to add 16 more full-time positions, including biologists and ecologists, to the park's existing staff of 19 full-time employees.

¶6. COMMENT. The Sister Park Partnership was a great follow-up to the JCM and a clear outcome of U.S.-Chile environmental cooperation, as embodied in the bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The FTA's

full environmental chapter, which entered into force in 2004, has gone a long way in shifting Chilean public and governmental attitudes towards the role of conservation in Chile's economic development. We will seek innovate ways to support the Sister Park Partnership and other future U.S.-Chile environmental cooperation.
KELLY